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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a brief implementation guide to assist programs that wish to replicate the project (a literacy tutoring program that sought to determine student needs and encourage student input), as well as an abstract of the project that created it and summaries of the results and participants' responses at two sites. The guide presents information on preparing the interview guide, strategies for recording interview information, suggestions for adapting the interview guide for local conditions, examples of information analysis, and suggested project outcomes--both product and process. Examples from the project are used throughout the guide. A complete interview form is provided, with questions and directions on how to ask the questions and record the results. Summaries of the project results at the two sites indicated that: (1) respondents were satisfied with the program, although one said that the program did not meet her needs; (2) the most common disappointment was tutors who did not show up; and (3) students experienced life changes as a result of the program. Recommendations from participants included increasing and creating more varied hours and perhaps initiating student support groups. (KC)

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THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE AFFILIATES PROJECT

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

A Guide to Assist Local Literacy Programs
in Implementing a Student-to-Student
Program Evaluation Process

Prepared by:

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June 1992

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THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE AFFILIATES PROJECT

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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ABSTRACT

(Revised: June 1992)

TITLE OF PROJECT: The Student Evaluation of the Affiliates Project

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Charles Harns, Field Services Director
Literacy Volunteers of America-Connecticut

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION: Literacy Volunteers of America-CT
30 Arbor Street-South, Hartford, CT 06106

Beginning Date: October 15, 1990 Ending Date: June 30, 1991

OBJECTIVES:

1. To better understand the life skill needs and accomplishments of selected LVA-CT basic reading students at those Affiliates, and the implications of those needs and accomplishments for LVA tutor training and educational programming.
2. To strengthen student involvement in policy making and program planning in LVA-CT.
3. To develop a replicable model of student involvement and support based on strong student input to program policies and practices.
4. To improve the overall LVA-CT Affiliate evaluation process.

PROJECT DESIGN

A team of four LVA-CT adult students, two at each of two local LVA-CT affiliate programs, will be recruited by local Affiliate volunteers and staff and will become the LVA-CT student evaluation team. Working with the project director the team will create a phone interview guide to be used to contact LVA-CT basic reading and ESL students as part of a program evaluation process. Each affiliate student team will conduct approximately 15 telephone interviews with students selected at random from each affiliate. The phone interviews will be conducted by each evaluation team and results will be recorded in a systematic way.

The phone interview will be comprised mainly of questions the students develop themselves, after participating in a preliminary session examining ideas and images about illiteracy. A process of metaphor analysis will be used to help the team analyze their ideas and values. Additionally, questions concerning the life skill tutoring needs and life skill achievements of the students will be included in the interview guide. Through this avenue of inquiry LVA-CT hopes to discover the aspects of their lives the students feel are most constrained by their poor reading skills. Similarly, the life skill achievements most commonly related to increased literacy skills will be discovered. The information will be used to re-focus the tutor training curricula and Affiliate policies and practices so as to maximize the Affiliates' responsiveness to student needs. Additionally, by involving students in this direct evaluation of Affiliate operation, the groundwork will be laid for increased involvement of students in policy and programming decisions, and a core group of informed and committed students will be created that can act as a strong student advocacy and support group.

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA - CONNECTICUT

Program Improvement Grant: AE-90-1-(a)
Student Evaluation of the Affiliates Project
End of Year Report

Project Implementation Guide

Background

This document provides a brief implementation guide to assist programs that wish to replicate the *Student Evaluation of the Affiliates Project*, implemented by LVA-CT in 1990/91. The project was funded with federal Adult Education Act funds, through the Program Improvement Grant process of the Connecticut Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Education. An abstract that presents the project's objectives and a synopsis of the overall approach is attached, as are summaries of the results and participatants' responses at each site.

Preparing the Interview Guide

The questions we ask about any subject are in large part a product of our point of view on that subject. Though often presented as purely objective inquiry, evaluation is really not immune from this subtle subjectivity. If, for example, we begin with the assumption that non readers and poor readers are not fully functioning people, our line of inquiry will likely focus on questions concerning the students' problems and failures. If we assume that being a non reader or a poor reader means that a person is below average in intelligence, our questions will be geared to that level of respondent. Literacy is field sewn rich with these attitudinal land mines, and when evaluating literacy programs we must take special care to unearth our prejudgments before we begin, even though we can not expect to disarm them all.

An important feature of this project was the steps taken to explore the student-evaluators' and the project director's attitudes about illiteracy as part of the process of developing the evaluation instrument. In the first meeting with the first group of student evaluators, several hours were spent clarifying attitudes through a process called *metaphor analysis*[1]. The product of this session was the core interview guide that was used in the project, subject to adaptation by the second group of student-evaluators who were trained at a later time. The same process of metaphor analysis was used with the second group to help again in clarifying attitudes and expectations, and in adapting the core interview guide for local use.

Through this process the team examined some of the predominant illiteracy metaphors, and suggested how these metaphors would influence the line of questioning we pursued. The session began by the project director posing this problem to the group: *Twenty percent of U.S. adults are considered to be illiterate. The U.S. is approximately 49th in overall literacy rate in the world. Why is this so?*

The students immediately rejected the explanation that these adults are retarded or stupid. Interestingly, this first group of evaluators did not reject entirely the idea that some of the adults might be lazy, and that particular issue will be discussed again on page five under *Adapting the Interview Guide for Local Conditions*. The group did remain perplexed and troubled that these high figures could describe such an apparently strong and wealthy country. No single clear explanation or answer could be agreed upon. This opening of the discussion set the groundwork for the analysis of the first metaphor: *illiteracy is a prison.*

The question was raised, "if illiteracy is a prison then an illiterate person is .....". The student-evaluators offered that an illiterate person would then be "just a person alone, isolated", "a person who believes that nobody trusts them or will give them a chance," " a person who begins not to care about improving her or his skills or position in life." The group found the analysis helpful in clarifying their views, but did not find the metaphor itself to be an appropriate representation of their beliefs about illiteracy and non readers. While they accepted the idea that illiteracy can isolate an individual and that non readers are often not in the mainstream, like prisoners, at the same time they rejected the negative images the term *prisoners* conjured up for them: bad people, dishonest, violent, not trustful, negative people and uneducated. We searched for another metaphor to further clarify our feelings and points of view.

Another common metaphor was then offered for analysis: *illiteracy is a disease.* The students immediately rejected this comparison, insisting that illiteracy is not a disease and that non readers are not sick. They rejected the idea that a literacy tutor is like penicillin--a vaccine. This image, they reasoned, does not show how much work the student must do to become literate. It minimizes the student's role in developing their own literacy skills. Additionally, the image of disease conjured up images of people with AIDS to them. People who, they reasoned, one might in some way have reason to be frightened of. The similarity they accepted was that one needed to do something to relieve one's illiteracy, take some action, much as a sick person must do something to return to health.

Finally, the group was asked to create their own, appropriate metaphor for illiteracy, if possible. Here is how their responses and self correcting of their language and thoughts progressed:

> "*Illiteracy has a cure.*" (student #1)
> "*Illiteracy has a ~~cure~~.*" (Correction by student #2)
> "*Illiteracy has a solution*". (student #2, accepted by student #1)
> "*The solution is to learn to read and write in programs that are not like schools, but are like homes.*" (students #1 and #2)

Though not a metaphor, this product of the group's analysis was seen as an acceptable and accurate view of illiteracy by the group. It is interesting to note the group's unwillingness to tie illiteracy and non readers to the same whipping posts to which the other groups, prisoners and the infirm, are often strapped. Additionally their view, expressing as it did a viewpoint on the kind of programs they preferred, easily led into discussion of the telephone interview guide. The question was asked: considering who we view non readers to be as people, and considering the kind of program we believe would best serve their interests, what questions should be asked during the interview? What do we need to know about our students and their experiences in our program?

The questions were generated by the students, written on a whiteboard by the project director, and discussed by all. Most were in some way changed before being accepted as useful and necessary questions. The project director added four specific questions that the literacy agency, and the project funder, wished to have addressed. These were the questions concerning "life skills," and asked the students to identify things they could not do, but wanted to, because of their limited literacy, and things they could now do as a result of tutoring (questions 3,4,7 and 9 in the attachment). The students accepted these as appropriate questions.

The interview guide which resulted had seventeen questions to be asked of current program students, and two additional ones to be asked of students who had dropped out. In later sessions student/evaluators from site number two would change the phrasing of some of the questions, and add one new question concerning learning disabilities (this became question 15 in the later version). The interview guide questions show the sophistication of thought and language of the students. When not limited by what they could read and write, the students' language and ideas demonstrated well their perspicacity. The result was an interview guide that is surprisingly complex and detailed.

Having created the instrument, our attention now turned to developing strategies that the student-evaluators could use both to read it and to write the respondents' and their own comments on the pages.

Recording Interview Information: Special Strategies for the Student-Evaluators

The important role the reader's background knowledge, or schema, plays in the reading process is by now well-accepted by most reading practitioners and researchers.[2,3] Essentially, the more predictable the text is to the reader the easier it will be to read. Having created the questions largely by themselves, the students had a strong leg-up on learning to read the interview guide themselves.

The group took turns reading the guide's questions at the end of the metaphor session. Those with special difficulties were encouraged to use special strategies to help themselves read. These strategies included writing their own brief notes next to questions they found difficult. These notes may be just a

word or two, or a symbol or picture, to remind them of the question's wording. Additionally, later in the project, students were given a mini-cassette recorder with a recording of the questionnaire being read. The students were asked to use the recording to practice reading the questions. Additionally, since all the students were being tutored in the LVA-CT program, they were asked to use their tutors as resource persons to help them. The interview guide became literacy curriculum in their tutoring sessions.

Finally, some students were encouraged to record their end of the actual phone interviews, repeating aloud a summary of the respondents' answers for the benefit of both the respondent and the interview documentation process. For example, with the recorder sitting on the table in front of them while they were doing an interview, the student-evaluator, after reading the question and hearing the respondent's reply, would in turn reply to the respondent: "So you feel the program should be more structured and provide workbooks? Is that correct?"

This approach gave the student a record of the responses they could go back to immediately after the interview ended, to help them fill in their notes. If they could not write what was on the tape, a friend or their tutor could help them. Again, their own words and writing became part of their literacy learning curriculum. The students did not, of course, record the actual telephone conversations.

Consistent with what is often termed "process writing" and "whole language" approaches to reading and writing[4], the notes of the student-evaluators needed only to be comprehensible for content at this point. The evaluators expressed themselves in writing in any way they could understand. They explained and elaborated verbally on these written notes to the project director in subsequent meetings. The result was a very high level of comprehensible, usable responses, despite the low literacy levels of the interviewers. For some of the student-evaluators, this activity became the most sophisticated literacy event they had attempted. Some noted that their success in this task reinforced and raised their level of self-esteem as readers.

Adapting the Interview Guide for Local Conditions

As mentioned, the metaphor analysis activity took place with each of the two groups of evaluators. This was done separately at the two sites; logistics simply precluded a plenary session with all evaluators, though such a session was seen as a highly desirable goal. Through these separate local sessions each group had the opportunity to examine and develop their ideas and to create or re-create the core interview guide in relation to their ideas.

Surprisingly, very few changes to the guide were made by the second group. Several small wording changes were made to aid ease-of-reading for the evaluators, or ease-of-understanding for the respondents, but only one substantive change was made. The substantive change was the addition of a

new question number fifteen by a student who was himself learning disabled. He felt, and the group agreed, that in order for the results to meaningfully influence programming decisions we should inquire if the students felt they were learning disabled and attempt to get some details on the kind of disabilities that were reported. This addition came directly from the metaphor work in which he offered an alternative explanation to the "lazy" description accepted by the first team as a possibly accurate description of some non readers.

Analyzing the Information

Meetings were held with the student-evaluators to analyze their findings through discussion. At site number one the respondents were invited to this meeting. At site two this was not logistically possible. During these sessions both the responses to the specific questions, one by one, were analyzed, and a general discussion of overall impressions and conclusions took place. Having the respondents at this meeting was very helpful, adding great detail and insight to the responses. The project director summarized the responses on the completed interview guides before each of the team meetings, and again summarized the conclusions after the meetings.

Project Outcomes

The project was designed to have both *product* and *process* outcomes. Product outcomes include the information gathered during the interviews: what we learned about the students and their opinions of the program. Process outcomes include attitudinal, self esteem or skill changes in the student-evaluators as a result of their participation in the project, as well as changes in student participation in the local programs that hosted the project. The product and the process outcomes for each site are separately presented as an appendix. Significant differences in findings are apparent between the two sites, and these differences are seen as being due to the differences in the program group of the students contacted. At site one all students interviewed were in the basic reading program, and at site two all were in the ESL program. In this section some of the most striking outcomes are presented, and implications for program development are included as italicized entries.

Product Outcomes

Students in the reading program who had identified specific learning goals generally reported better results with the program. *Students should be encouraged to identify, and assisted in the process of identifying, specific goals they want to achieve through improvement in their reading skills.*

Time is needed for the development of basic skills. In the ESL group nearly all the students who had been in the program three months or less reported no progress. All students who had been in the program a year or longer reported positive life changes. *Student retention is strongly linked with the achievement of demonstratable learning gains. Efforts to retain ESL students are worthwhile.*

In both programs students reported a high degree of satisfaction with the program and none were dissatisfied. Additionally, nearly all reported that the program was serving their needs. *The two programs have good reasons to believe that they are providing a program that is responsive to the students' needs and preferences in many ways.*

Students report life changes as a result of their tutoring. *Life changes are one important measure demonstrating student gains, and should continue to be included in data collection.*

Reading students rejected the idea of a more structured or step-by-step program, whereas the ESL students unanimously endorsed the idea. The ESL students wanted more tests and more homework, whereas the reading students did not. Both felt that LVA should provide instructional materials to the students, and most expressed a willingness to pay for the materials. *Approaches to program change should be geared to the specific program areas (ESL and basic reading), rather than blanketly applied to both areas. Programs should consider establishing a stock of select, high quality materials that can be sold to the students, where such a system does not already exist. Tutors should be oriented to the use of the materials and provided loan copies if possible. The LVA-CT State Office can make recommendations for particular materials, and can include them in the Books by Mail collection.*

There is minimal dissatisfaction with the program. Where it exists it is linked to irregular attendance by peers in ESL group tutoring, to an overemphasis on conversation in the ESL tutoring, and to the occasional tutor who does not show up for a tutoring session. *Where they are not already in place, limits on non-attendance should be adopted both for tutors and students and should be enforced.*

To improve the program the ESL students suggested increased and more varied hours of tutoring, and the reading students suggested maintaining the high quality of the tutors. *Varied and odd hours are needed to serve the ESL population. Efforts at maintaining a high quality of tutor training are worthwhile and are showing results.*

Half of the basic reading students expressed a preference for small group instruction. One-third of the ESL students expressed this preference. *Programs should not assume a need for confidentiality or a preference for one-to-one instruction in reading students. Instead both program options should be offered, and students should be enabled to make an informed choice whenever possible. Suggestions for improving group ESL instruction already mentioned above, such as placing a limit on the number of sessions a group member can miss and providing supplementary instructional materials, should be given high priority.*

Most students expressed a desire to meet and discuss the evaluation. *Projects such as this one can be used to initiate student support groups, or to strengthen existing ones. These kinds of projects can*

be useful to programs in achieving their goals of increased student participation in policy and programming decisions.

Process Outcomes

As a result of this project a student writing group was started at affiliate number one. This group developed from a core of students who had been phoned during the project, and has included other students as well. In this group students use a process writing approach to develop ideas and build skills, and to share their thoughts with one another. Additionally, one of the two student-evaluators from this site has been elected to the program's board of directors. This same student-evaluator noted in a project meeting that his work on this project had been the most significant literacy task he had yet accomplished, and that both his skills and his confidence in reading improved as result of this experience.

At affiliate number two the process outcomes have not been as pronounced, but the results of the project are still being considered and may yet result in such outcomes. The continuation of the positive outcomes of the project is almost entirely dependent upon the ability and the willingness of the local program to build upon the project at the local level.

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1. Deschler, David. (1990). Metaphor analysis: Exorcising social ghosts. In Jack Mezirow and Associates, Fostering critical reflection in adulthood (pp. 296-313). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

2. Goodman, K. (1986). What's whole in whole language? Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

3. Smith, F. (1985). Reading without nonsense. New York: Teachers College Press.

4. Graves, D.H. (1983). Writing: Teachers and children at work. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE AFFILIATES PROJECT

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: AFFILIATE NUMBER ONE

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA - CONNECTICUT

Report on the Student Evaluation of Affiliates Project

Summary of Results: Affiliate Number One

I. *Introduction*

In program year 1991, the State Office of LVA-CT received a grant from the CT Department of Education to implement the *Student Evaluation of the Affiliates Project*. Through this project two LVA-CT affiliates participated in a student-to-student evaluation process. The evaluation process included the training of a team of student-evaluators at each affiliate. These students interviewed students by phone, using an interview guide created in large part by the student evaluators themselves.

The project was to have both *product* and *process* outcomes. Product outcomes include the information gathered during the interviews. Process outcomes include attitudinal, self esteem or skill changes in the interviewers as a result of participating in the project, as well as changes in student participation in the local programs.

A summary of the results of the project activities at affiliate number one is presented here. A summary of the participants' responses, tallied on the questionnaire form, is attached.

Interviewers: Two LVA-CT Basic Reading Student

Respondents: 14 Reading Students, including three who had left the program

II. Product Outcomes

A. Summary of Findings by Interview Guide Question

1. At least half of the respondents had been with the program at least one year.

2,3. Less than half of the respondents mentioned being motivated by a specific reading/writing goal as their reason for entering the program. This is reinforced in the responses to question three.

4. Students who identified a specific reading writing problem in question three also generally report better results from the program.

5. 12 respondents were satisfied with the quality of the program. None were dissatisfied.

6. 11 respondents felt the program was serving their needs. One respondent, not currently in the program, responded that the program was not serving her needs.

7. 9 respondents noted improvement in their reading skills as an outcome of the program. One respondent noted that there was "nothing" they could do better as a result of the program. Few respondents, two or three, noted specific things they could do better now as a result of being tutored in the program.

8,9. Many respondents had specific life goals that they wanted to achieve but could not because of poor literacy. In question 9, all but one respondent

indicated that they thought the LVA program would help them achieve those goals to a large extent.

10. Most respondents rejected the notion of making the LVA program more structured, or more step-by-step in fashion. Few wanted more frequent tests or more homework. However, most wanted certificates to show regular progress.

    Most felt that LVA should provide instructional materials to the students, and most expressed a willingness to pay for the materials.

11. Two-thirds of the respondents expressed no disappointments with the program. The most common disappointment was tutors who did not show up.

12. Few solid suggestions were made to improve the program, when the question was directly asked. Maintaining the high quality of tutors was seen as important here.

13. Of the 11 respondents to this question, five clearly expressed a preference for one-to-one tutoring, and five clearly expressed a preference for small group.

14. Some suggestions for preventing dropouts were made. The most common suggestion was to be more regularly in touch with the students and tutors.

15. Only one of the 12 respondents to this question reported having a learning disability.

16. Two-thirds of the respondents expressed a desire to meet with other students to share ideas and concerns.

17. All but one requested a follow-up phone call when the evaluation was completed.

18. Little was added here.

    Questions specifically for students who had left the program:

19. One respondent reported disappointment with the program because their tutor left the program. Another left the program for family reasons.

20. Two of the three reported that they would like to return to the program. One reported that they no longer needed the program.

B. Analysis of Findings and Recommendations

1. Students in the reading program who had identified specific learning goals generally reported better results with the program. *Students should be encouraged to identify, and assisted in the process of identifying, specific goals they want to achieve through improvement in their reading skills.*

2. Students reported a high degree of satisfaction with the program and none were dissatisfied. Additionally, nearly all reported that the program was serving their needs. *The affiliate has good reasons to believe that they are providing a program that is responsive to the students' needs and preferences in many ways.*

3. Students report life changes as a result of their tutoring. *Life changes are one important measure demonstrating student gains, and should continue to be included in data collection.*

4. Reading students rejected the idea of a more structured or step-by-step program, and of having more homework and more testing. They did feel that LVA should provide instructional materials to the students, and most expressed a willingness to pay for the materials. *The program should consider establishing a stock of select, high quality materials that can be sold to the students, if such a system does not already exist. Tutors should be oriented to the use of the materials and provided loan copies if possible. The LVA-CT State Office can make recommendations for particular materials, and can include them in the Books by Mail collection.*

5. There is minimal dissatisfaction with the program. Where it exists it is linked to tutors missing meetings with their students, and with tutors wanting to delve too deeply into the student's personal lives. *Continuation of the close tracking of tutoring hours and missed meetings is called for.*

6. To improve the program the students suggested maintaining the high quality of the tutors. *Efforts at maintaining a high quality of tutor training are worthwhile and are showing results.*

7. Half of the basic reading students expressed a preference for small group instruction. *Programs should not assume a need for confidentiality or a preference for one-to-one instruction in reading students. Instead both program options should be offered, and students should be enabled to make an informed choice whenever possible.*

8. Most students expressed a desire to meet and discuss the evaluation. *Projects such as this one can be used to initiate student support groups, or to strengthen existing ones. These kinds of projects can be useful to programs in achieving their goals of increased student participation in policy and programming decisions.*

III. Process Outcomes

As a result of this project a student writing group was started at this affiliate. This group developed from a core of students who had been phoned during the project, and has included other students as well. In this group students use a "process writing approach" to develop ideas and build skills, and to share their thoughts with one another. Additionally, one of the two student-evaluators from this site has been elected to the program's board of directors. This same student-evaluator noted in a project meeting that his work on this project had been the most significant literacy task he had yet accomplished, and that both his skills and his confidence in reading improved as result of this experience. In part these outcomes were possible because of the early reporting of the results to this affiliate. This early reporting enabled the affiliate to build upon the process "while it was still warm".

The continuation of the positive product and process outcomes from this project is almost entirely dependent upon the ability and willingness of the local program to build upon the project at the local level.

THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE AFFILIATES PROJECT

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES: AFFILIATE NUMBER ONE

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA - CONNECTICUT

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENT EVALUATORS

For Interviewing Reading Students

Summary of Fourteen Participants' Responses At Affiliate #1

Interviewer: _____ Affiliate: _____ Date: _____

Name of Person Being Interviewed: _____

Before the Interview Begins: Introduce yourself. Give your name and say that you are a student with the Literacy Volunteers program. Tell the student that you got their name from the Literacy Volunteers office. Tell the student why you are calling. The purpose of the telephone interviews is to hear the students' opinions about the Literacy Volunteers program directly from them. The information will be used to help improve the tutoring program. Many students are being called to give their opinions. All of what is said will be confidential. When the information from the interviews is given to the Literacy Volunteers office, the student's name will not be mentioned, unless they want it to be mentioned. Tell the student that the interview will take about ten minutes. Ask if it is OK with them to do the interview now.

The Interview Begins:

1. How long have you been in the Literacy Volunteers program?

Less than six months	[1]	Six to twelve months	[2]
One to two years	[2]	Two to three years	[3]
Three or more years	[2]	Unknown/No Response	[3]

2. What were your reasons for entering the Literacy Volunteers program?

- Became a parent [2]
- Read to my children [1]
- Improve my education [1]
- Improve my reading or reading and writing [8]
- No reason given [2]

3. Were there any special problems you were having before you entered the program because of your limited ability to read?

Problem 1:
a. Need to read better to get a nursing degree
b. Bad problem of reading
c. Job applications
d. Reading
e. Just reading and writing
f. Reading street signs
g. Reading newspapers
h. Unspecified (2)

Problem 2:
a. Understanding things
b. Paying bills
c. Writing notes to friends

4. Are you still experiencing those same problems?

	Yes, I have the very same problems, there has been no change at all	Somewhat, there has been a small change for the better	The problem is now gone, or is much smaller
Problem 1:	b,d	e,f,g,h(2)	a,c
Problem 2:		a,b,c	

Comments: 1,c: I feel it getting better, I need more time
1,f: It's easier for me to take the bus
2,b: I am paying my bills on time

5. Are you satisfied with the quality of the Literacy Volunteers program?

Completely	Mostly	A Little Bit	Not at All
[5]	[6]		

[3] No Indication

Comments:
- Yes, I like the program
- Yes, very much! (from a "no indication" respondent)

6. Is the Literacy Volunteers program serving your needs?

Completely	Mostly	A Little Bit	Not at All
[4]	[4]		[1]

[6 No Indication]

Comments:
- Yes, it is [2: Both from "No Indication" Respondents]
- It did serve her needs [1: From a "No Indication"]
- [1] "Not at all", from a person not currently in the program

7. What can you do now that you could not do before you started with Literacy Volunteers, as a result of being tutored in the Literacy Volunteers program?

A) All single responses (except as noted): - Read better, Reading books, A little bit, Read "thank you" notes, I can read a lot better, I can read somewhat better, I can read a bit better, Just got to read better, Nothing, I can read better, Read a lot better, No Indication [3],

B) - Read junk mail now, I write a bit better, I am writing a little bit, I can count money better,

8. What do want to be able to do next, that you are not now able to do because of your limited ability to read? In other words, what new goals do you have?

A)
a. Go back to tutoring (from a dropout)
b. To read newspapers and fill out forms
c. Get a higher degree
d. Read a book by myself
e. Just learn to read and write good
f. I want to get my GED
g. Read and write better
h. No indication given (but question #9 answered)
i. To teach Sunday school
j. (Get a) nursing degree
k. Read to my kids
l. No indication given (question #9 not answered)

B)
a. To read the Bible
b. Improve my place in life
c. Get a High School degree
d. Some day I want to go into politics
e. Figure things out better; Go back to tutoring (dropout)
f. Get a drivers license

9. Do you think the Literacy Volunteers program will help you achieve these goals?

	Completely	**Mostly**	**A Little Bit**	**Not at All**
A)	a,b,c,d, j,k	e,f,g,h[2]		i,
B)	a,b,c,f	d,e		

Comments: -(I will completely achieve my goal) because I have a good tutor
- I like my tutor very much

10. Here are some suggestions for improving the Literacy Volunteers program that some other students have made. Do you agree with these suggestions?

A) The Literacy Volunteers program is too loosely structured. Literacy Volunteers students should go through a more "structured" or step-by-step learning program.

[3] Completely Agree [3] Partially Agree [5] Disagree

Comments:
- Depends on the person
- I liked it just the way it was (dropout)
- They should go one day at a time
- I think it's really up to the person

Do you want more frequent tests? Yes [1], No [8]

Do you want more homework? Yes [2], No [7]

Do you want Certificates that show the progress you have made?
Yes [7], No [2]

B) The Literacy Volunteers program should provide workbooks and other instructional material to the students to help them learn. Do you agree?

[8] Completely Agree [1] Partially Agree [0] Disagree

Comments:(If the student agrees with this, ask "Would you as a student be willing to contribute to the cost of such materials? If so, how much do you think is fair?")
- If I can afford it
- $50.00/year
- $2.00/three months
- $5.00/year [2]
- $10.00/year [2]
- If they bring their own books, OK; I can not afford to pay
- $20.00/month

11. Have you been disappointed in any way with the Literacy Volunteers program? If so, what has disappointed you?

- One tutor never showed up and never called
- No [6]
- In the past, tutors wanted to talk about my business
- Tutor did not show up

12. What can Literacy Volunteers do to make the program better?

- More meetings each week
- The tutor is doing a great job
- Get good tutors
- I have no ideas/Don't know [4]
- Get more good tutors like mine
- Let the student do their job
- I hope the money keeps coming in

13. Would you prefer to be tutored in a group? If yes, how big of a group?

- 3-4 people [2]
- Just one-on-one [5]
- 3 people
- 2-3 people [2]
- I can't get out (to a group), no transportation

14. What can Literacy Volunteers do to help prevent students from dropping out of the program?

- To keep in touch with the student and call them when they are not coming
- No ideas [5]
- Call students to see how things are going with the tutor
- More books
- Encourage them
- I think it's really up to the students

15. Have you ever been told that you have a "learning disability", or do you think you may have a learning disability? (If the answer is "Yes") . . . If you don't mind sharing this information, what kind of a disability is it?

- No [7] - Yes [1] - No Response [4]

- Reverses letters; puts in letters and words for other words
- Possibility (It's possible I have a learning disability)

16. Would you like to meet with other students to share your ideas and concerns?

YES [6] NO [3] UNSURE [0]

If yes or unsure, what times and places would be most convenient for you?

- No, I just want to learn how to read
- Various times/locations were noted

17. Would you like a follow-up phone call from me to tell you what the results of all the telephone interviews were?

YES [8] NO [1]

18. Is there anything you would like to add to what we have talked about already? You can say whatever you like.

- No, not really [7]
- (Provide) more programs
- It's important to get an education

----- END OF THE INTERVIEW -----

After the Interview: Thank the student for their time. Let them know how helpful they have been. Let them know that their ideas will help improve the Literacy Volunteers program. Ask them one last time if they have anything to add.

Review your notes while your memory of the conversation is still fresh. If you were tape recording your end of the interview, review the tape now. Make any changes or additions to your notes that are needed. Take a break before going on to the next call.

The Following Questions are only for Students Who Have Left the Program

Three Respondents

19. Why did you leave the program?

A) [1] I was disappointed with the program, it was not serving my needs. (Ask, "In what ways did the program not serve your needs?)

- My tutor left the program

B) _____ I met my goal with the program. I was satisfied, but I did not need the program any more.

C) _____ I wanted to continue with the program, but for various reasons I could not. (Ask, "Can you tell me what those reasons were, if you don't mind sharing them?")

D) [1] Other reasons:

- Family reasons

20. Would you like to return to the program?

A) [2] Yes, I liked the program and would like to return at some time in the future.

B) _____ Yes, but only if the program changes in these ways:

1)

2)

C) [1] No, I no longer have a need for this type of program.

D) _____ No, I had such a bad experience with Literacy Volunteers that I would never return

(If the student answered "YES" to part **A** or **B** above, and has not already mentioned it, ask them what their time preferences are for tutoring. Also, ask if they have any preference as to the kind of tutor: Young/Older? Male/Female?)

Preferred Times: Various times given

Kind of Tutor: No preferences

----- **END OF THE INTERVIEW** -----

After the Interview: Thank the student for their time. Let them know how helpful they have been. Let them know that their ideas will help improve the Literacy Volunteers program. Ask them one last time if they have anything to add.

Review your notes while your memory of the conversation is still fresh. If you were tape recording your end of the interview, review the tape now. Make any changes or additions to your notes that are needed. Make a tape recording of any comments or notes that you don't want to write down. Take a break before going on to the next call.

THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE AFFILIATES PROJECT

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: AFFILIATE NUMBER TWO

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA - CONNECTICUT

Report on the Student Evaluation of Affiliates Project

Summary of Results: Affiliate Number Two

I. *Introduction*

In program year 1991, the State Office of LVA-CT received a grant from the CT Department of Education to implement the *Student Evaluation of the Affiliates Project*. Through this project two LVA-CT affiliates participated in a student-to-student evaluation process. The evaluation process included the training of a team of student interviewers/evaluators at each affiliate. These students interviewed students by phone, using an interview guide created in large part by the student evaluators themselves.

The project was to have both *product* and *process* outcomes. Product outcomes include the information gathered during the interviews. Process outcomes include attitudinal, self esteem or skill changes in the interviewers as a result of participating in the project, as well as changes in student participation in the local programs.

A summary of the results of the project activities at affiliate number one is presented here. A summary of the participants' responses, tallied on the questionnaire form, is attached.

Interviewers: Two LVA-CT ESL Student

Respondents: 13 Reading Students, including three who had left the program

II. Product Outcomes

A. Summary of Findings by Interview Guide Question

1. Ten of the 13 respondents had been with the program less than one year.

2,3. In question two, only two of the respondents mentioned being motivated by a specific communication goal as their reason for entering the program. However, in question three, many specific communication needs were identified.

4. Students who were in the program only a short time reported that their problems had not changed. Only one of the respondents coded as **a,d,e,i** and **j** in this question had been with the program over three months. Respondents coded as **h, k,** and **l** had been with the program one year, a long unspecified time, and two years respectively, and all reported positive changes in this question. Length of stay in the program is certainly linked with success in solving their specific communication problems.

5. Eleven respondents were completely satisfied with the quality of the program, two were mostly satisfied, and none expressed a lesser degree of satisfaction.

6. Nine respondents felt the program was serving their needs completely, one felt it was mostly serving their needs, and three felt it was serving their needs a little bit. Of those three respondents, two had been in the program for three months, and one for one year.

7. At least eight of the respondents noted particular things they could do better as a result of the program, and four additional respondents noted general improvement in their abilities in using English.

8,9. Many respondents had specific life goals that they wanted to achieve but could not because of poor English skills. In question 9, all but one respondent indicated that they thought the LVA program would help them achieve those goals. Among the areas in which the students had the most confidence in the LVA program's ability to help them, were the following: help them communicate with their children, help them complete high school, help them fill out applications, help them continue to work, help them do their own translations, help them take a technician's course, help them with home problems, help them to work in a bank.

10. Most respondents agreed that the LVA program should be more structured or step-by-step. No respondent disagreed with this idea. Most wanted more frequent tests and more homework, as well as certificates to show progress.

Most felt that LVA should provide instructional materials to the students, and most expressed a willingness to pay for the materials.

11. Two-thirds of the respondents expressed no disappointments with the program. Of the two reported disappointments, the first one was offered by a student of one year, and the second by a student of two months.

12. Few solid suggestions were made to improve the program, when the question was directly asked. The most common theme here was the provision of more classes or tutoring opportunities, and the provision of these opportunities at odd times.

13. Of the 12 responses to this question, eight clearly expressed a preference for one-to-one tutoring.

14. Some suggestions for preventing dropouts were made. Among the suggestions were the following: giving more hours, advertising student achievements, giving more homework, offering more and odd hours for tutoring, and grouping students according to language level..

15. Nine respondents expressed an interest in meeting with the staff to discuss the program.

16. All but one requested a follow-up phone call when the evaluation was completed.

17. The responses here were many and varied.

<u>Questions specifically for students who had left the program</u> (two students):

18. One respondent reported leaving in order to enter ABE at a high level, and the other reported that they are moving and can no longer participate.

B. <u>Analysis of Findings and Recommendations</u>

1. The understanding that considerable time is often needed for the development of basic skills has been reinforced here. Nearly all the students who had been in the program three months or less reported no progress. All students who had been in the program a year or longer reported positive life

changes. *Student retention is strongly linked with the achievement of demonstratable learning gains. Program time spent on efforts to retain ESL students is a worthwhile investment.*

2. Students reported a high degree of satisfaction with the program and none were dissatisfied. Additionally, nearly all reported that the program was serving their needs. *The affiliate has good reasons to believe that they are providing a program that is responsive to the students' needs and preferences in many ways.*

3. Students report life changes as a result of their tutoring. *Life changes are one important measure demonstrating student gains, and should continue to be included in data collection.*

4. The ESL students polled unanimously endorsed the idea of a more structured or step-by-step program. They also wanted more tests and more homework, and felt that LVA should provide instructional materials to the students, and most expressed a willingness to pay for the materials. *The program should consider establishing a stock of select, high quality instructional materials that can be sold to the students, where such a system does not already exits. This stock is meant to augment materials that are normally loaned. Tutors should be oriented to the use of the materials and provided loan copies if possible. The LVA-CT State Office can make recommendations for particular materials, and can include them in the Books by Mail collection.*

5. There is minimal dissatisfaction with the program. Where it exists it is linked to irregular attendance by peers in ESL group tutoring and to an overemphasis on conversation in the ESL tutoring. *Where they are not already in place, limits on non attendance should be adopted for students and should be enforced. As noted immediately above, the students may benefit from using some of the commercially available ESL instructional materials, particularly to the extent that these materials expand upon conversation strategies with the building of concurrent reading, writing and focussed listening skills.*

6. To improve the program the ESL students suggested increased and more varied hours of tutoring. *As is well known, varied and odd hours are needed to serve the ESL population and efforts in this area should be continued.*

7. One-third of the ESL students expressed a preference for small group instruction. *Suggestions for improving group ESL instruction already mentioned above, such as placing a limit on the number of sessions a group member can miss, providing supplementary instructional materials and offering varied and odd-hour tutoring should be given high priority. As much as is possible, ESL students should be given the option of one-to-one tutoring.*

8. Most students expressed a desire to meet and discuss the evaluation. *Projects such as this one can be used to initiate student support groups, or to strengthen existing ones. These kinds of projects can be useful to programs in achieving their goals of increased student participation in policy and programming decisions.*

III. Process Outcomes

At the other affiliate involved in the implementation of this project, several positive process outcomes occurred. These included the development of a student writing group with a core membership of the students interviewed for this project, the election of one of the student-evaluators to the affiliate board of directors, and self-

reported improvements in self esteem and reading skills by one of the student-evaluators.

In part these outcomes were possible because of the early reporting of the results to that affiliate. This early reporting enabled the affiliate to build upon the process "while it was still warm". Because of the late reporting of these results to this affiliate, it is too early to say whether similar or other positive process outcomes will occur at this site as well.

The continuation of the positive process and product outcomes from this project is almost entirely dependent upon the ability and willingness of the local program to build upon the project at the local level.

THE STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE AFFILIATES PROJECT

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES: AFFILIATE NUMBER TWO

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA - CONNECTICUT

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENT EVALUATORS

For Interviewing ESL Students

Summary of Fifteen Participants' Responses At Affiliate #2

Interviewer: _____ Affiliate: _____ Date: _____

Name of Person Being Interviewed: _____

Before the Interview Begins: Introduce yourself. Give your name and say that you are a student with the Literacy Volunteers program. Tell the student that you got their name from the Literacy Volunteers office. Tell the student why you are calling. The purpose of the telephone interviews is to hear the students' opinions about the Literacy Volunteers program directly from them. The information will be used to help improve the tutoring program. Many students are being called to give their opinions. All of what is said will be confidential. When the information from the interviews is given to the Literacy Volunteers office, the student's name will not be mentioned, unless they want it to be mentioned. Tell the student that the interview will take about ten minutes. Ask if it is OK with them to do the interview now.

The Interview Begins:

1. How long have you been in the Literacy Volunteers program?

	Other:
1 month	1 year
2 months [2]	2 years
3 months [2]	a long time ago, doesn't remember how long (he was) in program
4 months [2]	1 week
6 months [2]	

2. What were your reasons for entering the Literacy Volunteers program?

- Learn English [12]
- He's trying to be a tutor in LVA now that he speaks well.
- I've got kids and need to help them.
- Husband is American
- Don't know

3. Were there any special problems you were having before you entered the program because of your limited knowledge of English? (The 12 respondents are coded as a - l)

Problem 1:

a. Deal with any DMV problems
b. Only talking - no grammar
c. Doesn't know any English
d. Lots of difficulty learning English
e. Can't go to school meetings
f. Filling out applications
f. Shopping .
g. Small problems
h. Going to doctor, hospital
i. Bank account
k. Small problems
l. Relationships at work

Problem 2:

a. Find a job
b. Very difficult with translation
c. Shopping
d. Filling out applications
e. Don't understand what they said at work
f. Insecure

h. Filling out applications
i. Going to hospital
l. Relationships with American people and school

Problem 3:

a. Talk to people
b. Afraid
c. Private problems
e. She has a son who is mute and blind; she needs to learn English to understand what her son's teacher said
f. Afraid
h. Shopping
i. Getting a driver's license

4. Are you still experiencing those same problems?

	Yes, I have the very same problems, there has been no change at all	Somewhat, there has been a small change for the better	The problem is now gone, or is much smaller
Problem 1:	a, d, e, i, j	b, c, f, g, f, h, k	l
Problem 2:	a, d, e, j	b, c, f, h, i	l
Problem 3:	a, d, e, j	b, c, f, h	i

Comments: -(e) She needs to speak and write more, needs a teacher who knows the same language her son uses (sign language)
- (h) Lots of problems with conversation, writing

5. Are you satisfied with the quality of the Literacy Volunteers program?

Completely	Mostly	A Little Bit	Not at All
[11]	[2]		

Comments:
- She is happy
- Tutor was necessary and helpful
- Needs more practice speaking
- Tutor was very patient [2]
- Tutor is a good motivator
- No time for more classes

6. Is the Literacy Volunteers program serving your needs?

Completely	Mostly	A Little Bit	Not at All
[9]	[1]	[3]	

Comments:
- Needs more writing and more days, the program has much conversation
- Needs more school days and writing
- Fill out applications, doctor's appointments, more independence
- Because now I know I am in the right place
- Helps a lot

7. What can you do now that you could not do before you started with Literacy Volunteers, as a result of being tutored in the Literacy Volunteers program?

A)
- Too early to say [2]
- Speaking English at work
- Apply for advancement at work

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- Understand more [2]
- Shopping [3]
- Go to the public departments
- Was a big help in many ways
- Nothing, I was not in the class long enough
- Speak more

B) - Go to the bank [2]
- Seeing the doctor
- Reading the newspaper
- Tutor spoke too much English
- Go to SNET
- Read, writing, go to any place
- Give the answers, search

8. What do want to be able to do next, that you are not now able to do because of your limited English language ability? In other words, what new goals do you have?

A) a) (Take a) computer course [2]
b) Help (her) school children
c) High school
d) Help somebody who does not speak English [3]
e) Talk with Americans [2]
f) Wants to get his own business
g) Fill out applications
h) Speak, read and write English fluently
i) Continue to work

B) a) Graduate from ABE program
b) Grow up in English
c) (Take a) technician course
d) Not ask anybody to help with translations
e) Find a better job [5]
f) Take another course
g) No more home problems with husband (she is Brazilian, husband is American)
i) Continue to progress, take opportunities, step by step
j) Work in bank, cashier

9. Do you think the Literacy Volunteers program will help you achieve these goals?

	Completely	Mostly	A Little Bit	Not at All
A)	b, c, d, g, i	d, e, h		f
B)	b, c, d, g, h, i, j	c, d, f	a	

Comments:
- Now he is a teacher of English, before he was a student
- Everything is possible in this life
- Classes in the morning, the class has over 5 students and then no one shows up, the tutor does not feel good when she sees one or two students in the class
- If you wish you can make the practice with American people every day.
- This is a serious program and she believes if (she) goes every day she's going to be successful.
- Sure - live like American people
- English is necessary in any part of the world. You are American you have to talk English

10. Here are some suggestions for improving the Literacy Volunteers program that some other students have made. Do you agree with these suggestions?

A) The Literacy Volunteers program is too loosely structured. Literacy Volunteers students should go through a more "structured" or step-by-step learning program.

___ Completely Agree [10] ___ Partially Agree [2] ___ Disagree

Comments:
- Find a better way to teach
- He has lots of help from his tutor
- For a first step the program is very good
- Students, overall, want more tutoring sessions per week

Do you want more frequent tests? yes [7]

Do you want more homework? yes [7]

Do you want Certificates that show what progress you have made? yes [8]

B) The Literacy Volunteers program should provide workbooks and other instructional material, such as cassettes, to the students to help them learn.

___ Completely Agree [9] ___ Partially Agree [3] ___ Disagree

Comments: (If the student agrees with this, ask "Would you as a student be willing to contribute to the cost of such materials?" (yes 8). If so, how much do you think is fair?")

- The students can buy the books or materials because they need to follow a program, we can help with the cost.
- Everybody can help to do the program better.
- $20

11. Have you been disappointed in any way with the Literacy Volunteers program? If so, what has disappointed you?

no [10]
yes [2] - More tests, more exercises, too much conversation
- (Disappointed) with the students who do not show up in the class

12. What can Literacy Volunteers do to make the program better?

- No response [3]
- Tell the student about the course, the learning program
- Does not know the program yet
- Give more classes, the tutor can explain better, the tutor does not feel good when the students do not show up
- More exercises, more classes [4]
- School on Sunday for those who can't come weekdays
- Following a book [2]
- Cassettes, small groups

13. Would you prefer to be tutored in a group? If yes, how big of a group?

No response [1]
No [8]
Yes [4] - No more than three students
- No more than four students [2]
- Two persons can use more vocabulary.
- Alone (a person) can learn faster and better
- (In a) small group one can learn faster than another one and you waste your time (in a big group)
- I prefer one to one but a small group is ok

14. What can Literacy Volunteers do to help prevent students from dropping out of the program?

- It depends on the student. Let LVA know ahead of time to see if new arrangements can be made.
- Give more incentives, tell them that it is the language where they live now, any place they go they have to know English.
- Give more incentives, exercises, hours, advertise achievements of students
- Make students come to the class, give more homework, ask why they don't show up, tell and explain for them if they don't show up they never gonna learn English.
- Make more shifts, Saturday and Sunday, who can't study weekdays can study on weekends with more hours.
- Keep a group at the same level, this way everybody still comes to a school, nobody wastes their time, I mean, the tutor's and the student's.
- The cause is not LVA. It is the the student's. They work and left the school. Ask them why? Maybe you can transfer to another day.
- This is a personal problem.
- Change the hours, change the teaching style to fit the student's strengths.

15. Would you like to meet with other students and with Literacy Volunteers staff to discuss the Literacy Volunteers program?

YES	NO	UNSURE
[9]	[3]	

If yes or unsure, what times and places would be most convenient for you?

- At the school
- Sunday afternoon at LVA
- Night time at the school
- 11am, Sunday at the school
- 7pm at LVA
- 7pm, anyplace
- 8pm

16. Would you like a follow-up phone call from me to tell you what the results of all the telephone interviews were?

YES	NO
[10]	[1]

17. Is there anything you would like to add to what we have talked about already? You can say whatever you like.

- No response [1]
- Congratulations to LVA. The tutor is now a best friend (of the family) and sometimes the families meet.
- If the class was everyday, we can pick up better and faster within a short time everybody can be talking and writing English.
- LVA is very important for us, have to go ahead, can't stop, many people need LVA.
- He likes the questions and expects we can change and make a better program.
- If the interview is for doing something better, I hope they can make it, this way nobody else is going to waste
- his time.
- More publicity about LVA
- Tutor should be more strict keeping control of the group, keeping other students from dominating the discussion.

----- END OF THE INTERVIEW -----

After the Interview: Thank the student for their time. Let them know how helpful they have been. Let them know that their ideas will help improve the Literacy Volunteers program. Ask them one last time if they have anything to add.

Review your notes while your memory of the conversation is still fresh. If you were tape recording your end of the interview, review the tape now. Make any changes or additions to your notes that are needed. Take a break before going on to the next call.

The Following Questions are only for Students Who Have Left the Program

18. Why did you leave the program?

A) ____ I was disappointed with the program, it was not serving my needs. (Ask, "In what ways did the program not serve your needs?)

B) ____ I met my goal with the program. I was satisfied, but I did not need the program any more.

C) ____ I wanted to continue with the program, but for various reasons I could not. (Ask, "Can you tell me what those reasons were, if you don't mind sharing them?")

D) 2 Other reasons: - (He) went to South Street School ABE program. He is in a high level, now wants to be an ESL tutor
- He's moving, works in another place, just comes home on Sunday

19. Would you like to return to the program?

A) ____ Yes, I liked the program and would like to return at some time in the future.

B) ____ Yes, but only if the program changes in these ways:

1)

2)

C) 1 No, I no longer have a need for this type of program.

- I don't have any time to come back.

D) ____ No, I had such a bad experience with Literacy Volunteers that I would never return

(If the student answered "YES" to part A or B above, and has not already mentioned it, ask them what their time preferences are for tutoring. Also, ask if they have any preference as to the kind of tutor: Young/Older? Male/Female?)

Preferred Times:

Kind of Tutor:

----- END OF THE INTERVIEW -----

After the Interview: Thank the student for their time. Let them know how helpful they have been. Let them know that their ideas will help improve the Literacy Volunteers program. Ask them one last time if they have anything to add.

Review your notes while your memory of the conversation is still fresh. If you were tape recording your end of the interview, review the tape now. Make any changes or additions to your notes that are needed. Take a break before going on to the next call.